



FRONT PORCH SERIES BROADCAST CALLS

A FRAMEWORK FOR PLANNING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN EMERGENT LITERACY

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QUESTIONS FROM THE APRIL 28, 2014 FRONT PORCH SERIES BROADCAST CALL

Q: A few listeners had questions about some of the acronyms that you used. Can you tell our listeners what the IGDIs are?

A: Individual Development Growth Indicators. They are a series of assessments.

Q: Can you tell them what PALS is?

A: Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening

Q: The last one to just define for our listeners is RTI.

A: Response to Instruction—grouping kids who don't make as much progress as you would hope or pulling out kids who don't make as much progress as you would hope, giving really good intentional instruction and giving them additional instruction to meet their individual needs.

Q: Can you say a little bit about who you selected, and how you supported the coaches?

A: The coaches were actually retired teachers from Danville, which is the town where we did the project. They were volunteers. There also was a supervisor of coaches; we called her the super coach. We trained the coaches and then she provided regular monthly meetings of coaches (and sometimes more often, depending on what was happening). They might do problem-solving, share issues, practice skills—looking at specific coaching skills and then practicing what those might be. We did orientations at the beginning of each year, even though there wasn't a whole lot of coach turnover, but there was a little bit. So, getting new people up to speed and then just trying to go deeper into what it meant to be a coach. While ours focused on emergent literacy, you could do the same type of thing with professional development and coaching around any content area.

Q: Was there any resistance to the coaches, and if so, how did you manage that, or how did your coaches manage that?

A: I think initially in some classrooms there was. Some classrooms were grateful to have coaches. All of them, of course, had to reorganize their thinking because they had a person in there on a regular basis. But I think they came to really value the coaches. And even the teachers that were most resistant at the beginning I would say, by the end, regarded the coach as most beneficial. There were some really good relationships established there and I wouldn't be surprised if they were still going on. I can't think of any classrooms that continued to resist the coach. In some cases we changed coaches because we felt like a different coach might be a better fit for a particular classroom. That happened primarily at the beginning of the project. Once we found the right fit, then they pretty much stuck with those and I think they really found them to be very helpful. It's like with any of us when someone new comes into your classroom. It's always a little scary as they're observing you, but as those relationships developed you just saw the growth happening.

Q: Could you provide some examples of how you help teachers integrate instructional support in their classrooms?

A: In a couple of classrooms that I worked with, when one of our coaches was on maternity leave, what I did was just take running records of language. Then the teacher and I went back and identified the instructional supports that she had built in that were already in her language. [We] talked about what she could've said or done to go beyond that. And then [we] came back to that again the next time. It just became a focus for coaching by trying to help her look at her own language. We also used videotapes for that focus. I also think we did a lot in training. We did a lot of practice and cues that teachers could use to remind themselves to use certain instructional supports and strategies. They actually would come up with, like, if you're reading a book during story time, they would put little sticky notes to remind themselves to ask questions, and to ask them in a certain way—those kinds of things. So, we were trying to provide them with those kinds of supports around instructional strategies, also.



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